

Report by General Manager (A) 09-24-2020

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

Board Action/Information Summary

☐ Action ☒ Information

MEAD Number:
202210

Resolution:
☐ Yes ☒ No

TITLE:

Covid-19 Recovery Plan & Budget Update

PRESENTATION SUMMARY:

Staff will provide the Board with an update on WMATA's Covid-19 recovery efforts, including service restoration plans, impacts to the budget, operations, and capital project delivery.

PURPOSE:

This presentation communicates the current status, next steps and anticipated impacts associated with WMATA's Covid-19 recovery efforts.

DESCRIPTION:

This presentation provides the Board with updates regarding how Metro is addressing Covid-19 for customers, employees, and project delivery.

Key Highlights:

- Metro's top priority remains the safety and well-being of its workforce and customers.
- The jurisdictions in the region are moving forward with phased reopening plans, however, some restrictions remain in place and the pace of progress is slower than original assumptions and projections.
- WMATA is in the Managed Re-Entry phase of recovery and is providing 70-80 percent of normal service levels.

Background and History:

Strategic Approach

Metro is powered by its employees and their wellbeing is our top priority. For their protection during this pandemic, changes were implemented to work schedules and practices to reduce their risk of exposure to the corona virus. To protect customers, at the beginning of the pandemic, while providing transportation for essential trips, WMATA decreased service to align with stay-at-home policies and suppressed ridership by reducing bus service to Sunday levels during the week; decreased rail frequency, closed the lowest ridership stations, and launched a public information campaign to encourage use of Metro for essential travel only.

In coordination with federal, state, and local officials, as well as public health experts,

Metro is recovering service in a phased approach. The planned recovery levels are based on various workforce availability scenarios and anticipated customer social distancing. While ridership demand is difficult to predict for the next 12-18 months; the goal is to increase service in stages, ahead of demand, to maintain social distancing for customers to the extent possible.

Customer Research

Metro has been regularly surveying rail and bus customers to understand their concerns and preferences during the pandemic. We have also reached out to employers through business leadership organizations, a special website, and surveys, as well as our own SmartBenefits employers, to anticipate demand changes from return to work plans. Ridership showed minor increases in August, as customers continued to travel mostly for essential trips to work, food stores, pharmacies and medical appointments. However, both rail and bus customers reported more travel to see and care for family and friends in August, as well as for leisure activities in warmer weather.

Customer Focus groups highlighted the need to reduce anxiety about riding Metro by promoting the steps being taken to keep riders safe and reminding riders what they can do to reduce their risk. In August, a new campaign was launched to reassure riders that Metro is taking proactive measures to help reduce the spread of Covid-19 and to let riders know what to expect when they ride. In-system signage focuses on what riders can do to stay safe (e.g., wear a face covering, maintain social distance (as feasible), wash hands frequently, don't ride when sick, etc.)

Service Recovery Plan

As the region's leaders relax stay-at-home policies and some riders begin to return to workplaces, three pre-planned service levels -- Stabilization, Managed Re-Entry and Recovery -- have been developed to provide as much service as possible within Metro's anticipated workforce availability. Re-Entry is the current phase of WMATA's pandemic service and Metro increased capacity in preparation for returning customers.

Current Phase: Managed Re-Entry Service Plan

Metrobus As of August 23rd, Metrobus implemented a new span of service, while continuing rear door boarding, and continuing to empower employees to skip stops where on-bus conditions prevent social distancing. The revised bus schedule provides service operating from 4am to 12am at approximately 70 to 85% of pre-Covid service levels.

Metrorail As of August 16th re-instituted a peak/off-peak schedule and providing service weekdays from 5am to 11pm and weekends from 7/8am to 11pm. Headways during peak service are shorter than 10 minutes on all lines and 15 minutes or shorter during off-peak times. It is anticipated that this service pattern will remain in place through December. Metro is also expanding the After-Hours TNC program to provide service Monday through Thursday and Sunday from 11pm to 5am and on Friday and Saturday from 1am to 7am. In addition, the subsidy per trip will be doubled from \$3 to \$6 per ride.

MetroAccess continues to schedule in a manner that avoids shared-rides and place Covid-19 positive customers on a third-party service. MetroAccess is informing customers of available alternative services and associated promotions to relieve pressure on the dedicated service as it avoids shared-rides and the associated efficiency.

Proactive-Recovery Disinfecting Cleaning by Contractors:

In August, Metro began monthly Proactive Disinfecting Cleaning to support the managed Re-Entry plan. As employees begin to phase back into Metro facilities, contractors will be deployed monthly to disinfect rail yards, bus garages, and other administrative facilities. It is anticipated that 35 proactive recovery disinfecting cleanings will be performed by contractors each month.

Financial Update

In June, ridership and fare revenue were below budget by 83 percent and 96 percent respectively. However, Metro concluded FY2020 with a balanced budget through the use of federal CARES Act funds and careful management of expenses.

During July, the first month of FY2021, total ridership was 34 percent better than budget, but fare revenue was 12 percent below budget and 92 percent less than prior year. Additional Cares Act funds, totaling \$80M, were used to offset lost revenue. Operating expenses were favorable to budget due to lower services, paratransit, and materials costs.

Capital Program Plan

Critical to successful recovery, and continuity of safe, reliable service, is maintaining progress on the capital program. The guidance from Department of Homeland Security Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency (DHS-CISA) included mass transit and construction as essential, as did regional stay-at-home policies. Therefore, all projects have been authorized to continue working, though many have been impacted by the pandemic.

Metro has been working with its contractors to revise construction protocols to incorporate CDC guidance for hand and tool washing, social distancing and wearing face coverings or masks. The biggest impact to the capital program has been workforce availability challenges that affect Metro's ability to support capital work, such as providing escorts and establishing work zones. In addition, some projects may see delays due to productivity losses and supply chain disruptions.

The July and August track work events are complete and crews used that time to perform state of good repair work including, but not limited to replacing 70 crossties; 13 third rail insulators; and over 1800 linear feet of rail renewal.

Discussion:

The jurisdictions in the region are moving forward with phased reopening plans. These early recovery phases are incremental, and the jurisdictions are continuing to

encourage residents and businesses to stay safe, maintain social distancing, continue careful cleaning and disinfecting, wear face coverings and continue to limit non-essential travel. Many businesses remain closed and many employers in the region, including the federal government, continue to use maximum flexibility telework.

WMATA is similarly situated as we continue to protect our employees by supporting remote work where feasible and following applicable CDC Guidelines. Metro has increased cleaning and disinfection and continues to require employees to wear face coverings and encourage good hand hygiene.

In implementing the Re-Entry phase of the recovery plan, Metro is working within the framework of a hierarchy of controls to protect employees and customers. The hierarchy of controls is as follows:

- Elimination – Physically remove the hazard
- Substitution – Replace the hazard
- Engineering Controls – Isolate people from the hazard
- Administrative Controls – Change the way people work
- PPE – Protect the worker with Personal Protective Equipment

FUNDING IMPACT:

None.

TIMELINE:

Previous Actions	May 2020 – Covid Recovery Planning Update June 2020 – Covid-19 Pandemic Recovery Plan & Budget update July 2020- Covid-19 Pandemic Recovery Plan & Budget update
Anticipated actions after presentation	October 2020 – Covid-19 Recovery Plan & Budget Update

RECOMMENDATION:

No recommendation is made in this information item.

Covid-19 Recovery Plan Update

Board of Directors
September 24, 2020



The Region Today

- Some State-level movement to Phase 3
 - Continued social distancing and face covering requirements
 - Some businesses operating at limited capacity
- Regional Jurisdictions continue in Phase 2
- Federal Government continues telework flexibility
- Local School Districts currently virtual/distance learning
- Continuing to coordinate with federal and regional officials on re-opening plans and guidance



Coordinating with federal and regional officials on re-opening plans and guidance

Protecting Safety of Employees and Customers

Individual Actions

- Face coverings required for employees and customers
- Social distancing required for employees and encouraged for customers
- All employees continue to stay home if sick and testing is available

Stations and Vehicles

- Face coverings available for customers
- Intense response, recovery, and proactive cleaning
- Shields installed for bus operators

Operational Changes

- Bus and rail service increased in August
- Launched contactless mobile fare payment for rail and bus
- Operating all trains with 8 cars to support social distancing
- Rear door boarding for bus customers

Protecting Metro's Employees

- 12,300 employee workforce
 - Total Covid-related reports: 2,032
 - Total return to work: 1,864
 - Lives lost: 1

Metro Employees Covid-19 Cases

Confirmed Cases	Returned to Work	Currently Hospitalized
354	330	1

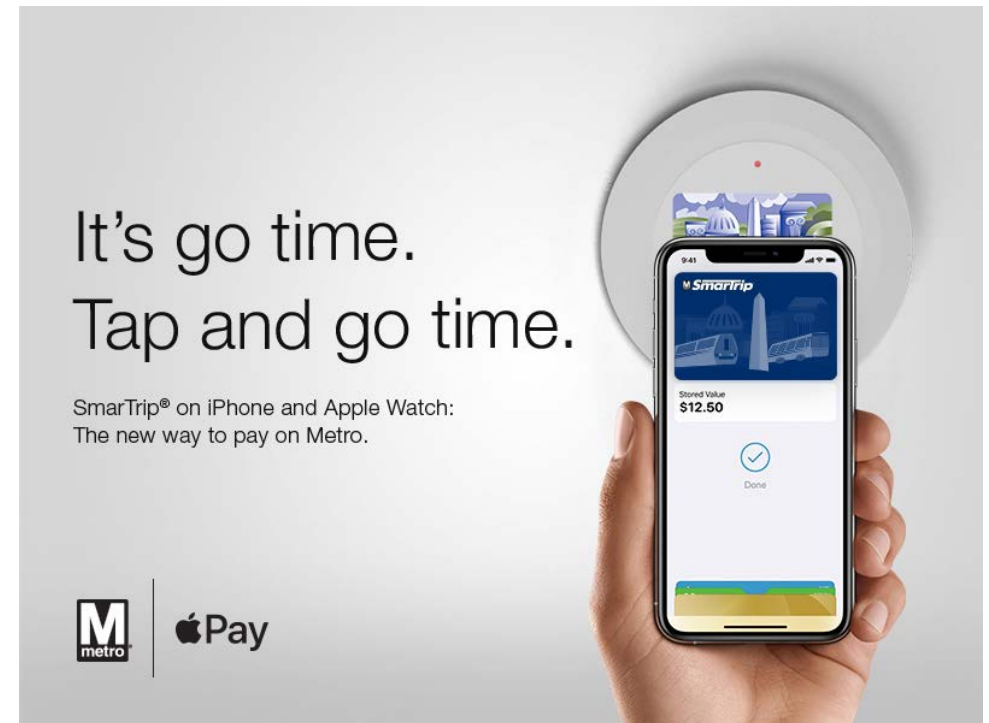
WMATA Employee case data as of Sept. 22, 2020



Public Health/Education Campaign Fall 2021

Paid TV, Social, Digital Display & Radio, Special Language

- Focus group tested messages reassure riders
- CDC signage refresh in system
- Touchless fare payment available
- Expect campaign to move needle for those who **need/want** to travel but most do not



Managed Re-Entry Service Began August 2020

Current Metrobus Service

- Span of hours: 4a-12a
- Weekday: 73% of pre-Covid-19 Service
- Saturday: 87% of pre-Covid-19 Service
- Sunday: 86% of pre-Covid-19 Service
- Level of service constrained by Metrobus workforce availability
- Continue rear-door boarding and no fare collection until January
- Some crowding on certain bus lines – continuing to monitor and deploying additional buses when possible

Current Metrorail Service

- ~90% of pre-Covid-19 service
- Weekday: 5am-11pm; Weekend: 7/8am-11pm
- Increased train frequency
- All stations now open
- Mobile fare payment now available

Managed Re-Entry Service Plan

Increased Peak, Wider Base

Weekday Service	PEAK	8 min	BL OR GR YL SV	5 min	RD
	OFF PEAK	15 min	BL OR GR YL SV	12 min	RD
Weekend Service	SAT & SUN	15 min	BL OR GR YL SV	12 min	RD

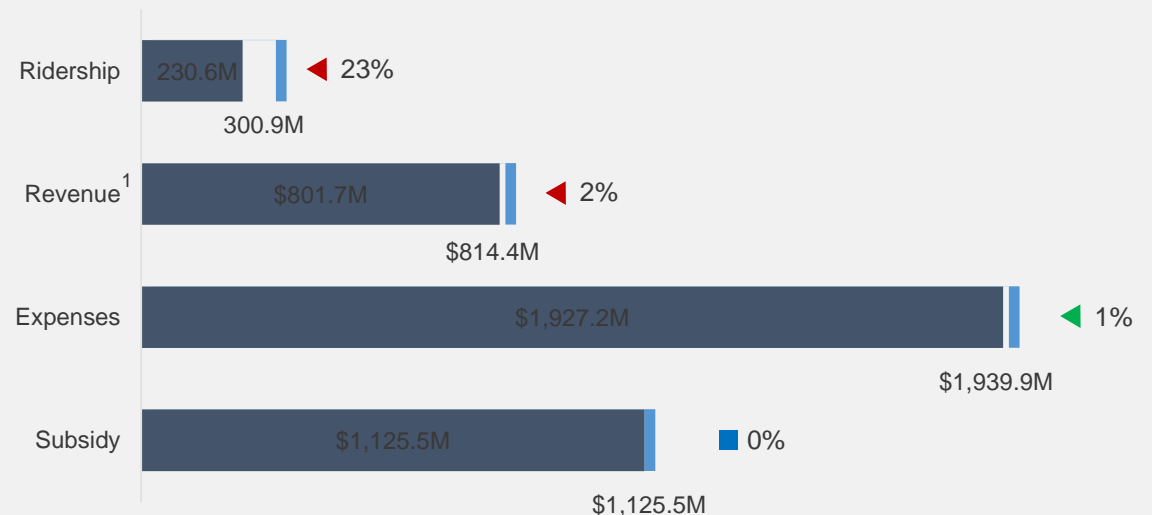
Year-end Financial Performance

Q3 Fare Revenue losses offset with Management Actions and CARES Act funding

- Ridership was lower by 83% in June compared to budget and down 23% overall for the year
- Fare Revenue was 96% below budget in June and 28% below budget for the year; offset by \$221 million in CARES Act funds to balance FY2020
- Operating Expense were below budget with savings in propulsion, fuel, utilities and material costs

FY2020 Year-end Balanced Budget

FY2020 Year-end Actuals vs. Budget



1. Includes CARES Act reimbursement of \$221M through June 30, 2020

July Financial Performance and Outlook

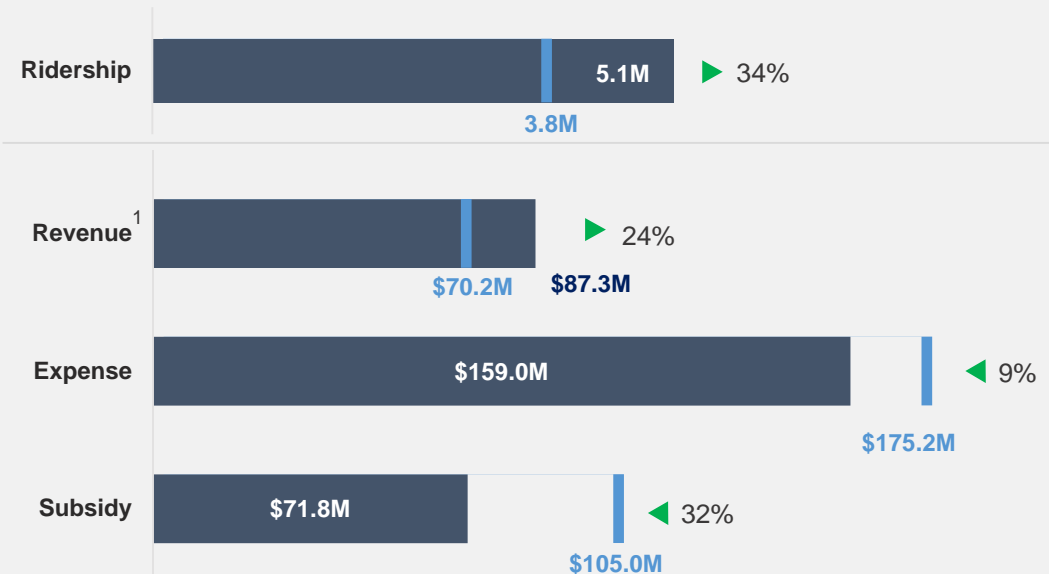
Ridership Better than Budget; Revenue Below Budget

- Ridership was 34% better than budget but 81% below prior year
- Fare Revenue² was 12% below budget but 92% less than prior year; with \$80M CARES Act funds offsetting lost revenue
- Operating Expenses were favorable to budget due to lower services, paratransit, and materials
- FY2021 outlook remains subject to Covid-19 trends and impacts

2. Excludes parking revenue

FY2021 July Financial Performance

FY2021 YTD Actuals vs. Budget (Through July)



1. Includes CARES Act reimbursement of \$80M through July 31, 2020

Capital Program Update

Safety
Reliability
State of Good Repair

- Initial Covid-19 project delivery impacts due to supply chain, manufacturing, and changes to execution of work
- Accelerating safety and state of good repair programs during period of low ridership, including platform and structural rehabilitation programs
- \$1.8 billion invested in FY2020
- FY2021 forecast ~\$1.9 billion
- \$30 million of projects deferred – no impact on safety or state of good repair

Recovery Planning: 90-Day Look Ahead

■ October:

- Public hearing on FY2021 potential service changes
- Inauguration Countdown Meeting

■ November:

- Decisions on FY2021 service changes
- GM/CEO Proposed FY2022 Budget
- Inauguration Countdown Meeting

■ December:

- FY2022 Budget Public Hearing authorization
- Notification of service changes
- Inauguration Countdown Meeting